

Past meets present at city's party

By CHERI BALLEW
Item Staff

Huntsville's Sesquicentennial celebration Friday had everything — a birthday cake, a band, colorful decorations and speeches from state and local dignitaries. Even founding father Pleasant Gray and his wife Hannah joined in the festivities.

Mayor Jane Monday welcomed the crowd of several hundred gathered at Town Creek and introduced members of the platform party, which included Sen. Kent Caperton, Rep. Allen Hightower, Texas Department of

Corrections director O.L. "Lane" McCotter, Huntsville mayor emeritus Morris Waller, former mayor of Huntsville Sam Robbins, Sam Houston State University president Elliott Bowers, and Walker County Historical Commission chairman James Patton.

City manager Gene Pipes and council members Jerry Dowling, Steve Davis, Percy Howard, Bill Green, Gary Bell and Gene Barrett also attended the ceremonies. They were joined by county commissioners Sam Park, James Burnett and Joe Malak.

"Our founders, such as Pleasant Gray and other pioneers, would be proud today if they could come back and see a thriving cultural, alert city which has grown from such a small beginning," County Judge Ralph Davis said.

Davis was proved correct when the character Gray, asked to give his opinion about the city that grew from the landmark he received in 1835, said, "I'll put my stamp of approval on it."

Gray was not alone in his praise of Huntsville.

among all cities in Texas," Caperton said, "and it stands as an example of what Texas can do. It stands as a shining example of what we have been in the past."

Hightower, a resident of Huntsville since 1976, said that Huntsville is special to him.

"Huntsville is blessed with an entrepreneur attitude," he said. "There is nothing to hold Walker County back."

Local historian Shirley Dye, the great-great-niece of Hannah Gray, talked about her

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SMILE!

Mayor Jane Monday extends a special invitation for Huntsville residents to be part of the community picture at Pritchett Field this morning at 9 a.m.

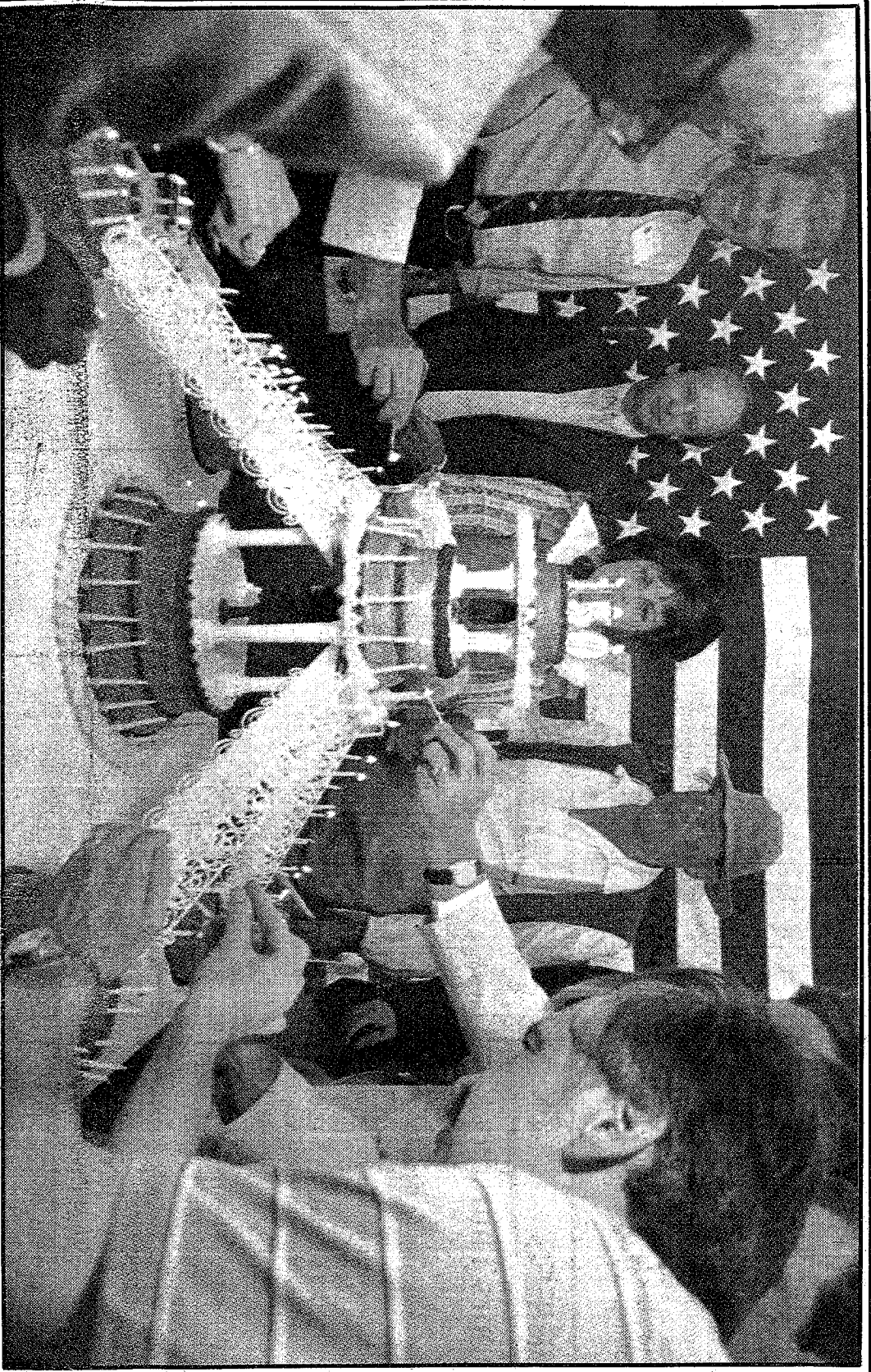
The picture is part of the city's celebration of its 150th birthday.

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Red-letter day

Huntsville City Council members Percy Howard, far left, Gary Bell, Sen. Kent Caperton, Jauniee Etheredge, Frank Robinson, and council member Jerry Dowling, far right, help to light the cake to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the city of Huntsville Friday. The cake was made by Yvonne Shumaker, an employee of the Huntsville Police Department, and had 150 candles on it. Below, Frank Robinson, playing the role of Pleasant Gray, founder of Huntsville, and Jauniee Etheredge, as his wife Hannah, try to hawk parcels of land as in days of old at the ceremonies commemorating the 150th birthday of Huntsville at Town Creek Park Friday evening.



Philip Barr photos

FROM THE FRONT

Past, present at party for city

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research into her family's history. Dye also received a hug from her "aunt."

The Sesquicentennial celebration began with an open house and early Texan craftsmen exhibit at the Gibbs-Powell House. City council members lit and blew out the candles on the city's birthday cake following the speeches. Party guests ended the evening by eating cake and listening to a concert by the University-

Community-Camp Band.

Bowers, who came to Huntsville in 1937, said that the birthday party was "one of the most exciting things (in Huntsville) since I've been here."

Monday said that she was delighted with the large turnout for the celebration and thought it could become an annual event.

"Hopefully, it's just the beginning," she said.

"The tremendous amount of fellowship" shown by those at-

tending the celebration was gratifying, community development director Bob Smith said.

"It shows that people are still interested in small-town, hometown America," Smith said.

Robbins, mayor of Huntsville from 1950 to 1954, said that while there were no similar celebrations during his term as mayor, "it's a good thing to get together like this."



Dignitaries join festivities

State Rep. Allen Hightower, D-Huntsville, joined officials Friday night in recognizing the many good things Huntsville has to be proud of during its 150th birthday celebration, saying God has blessed America.

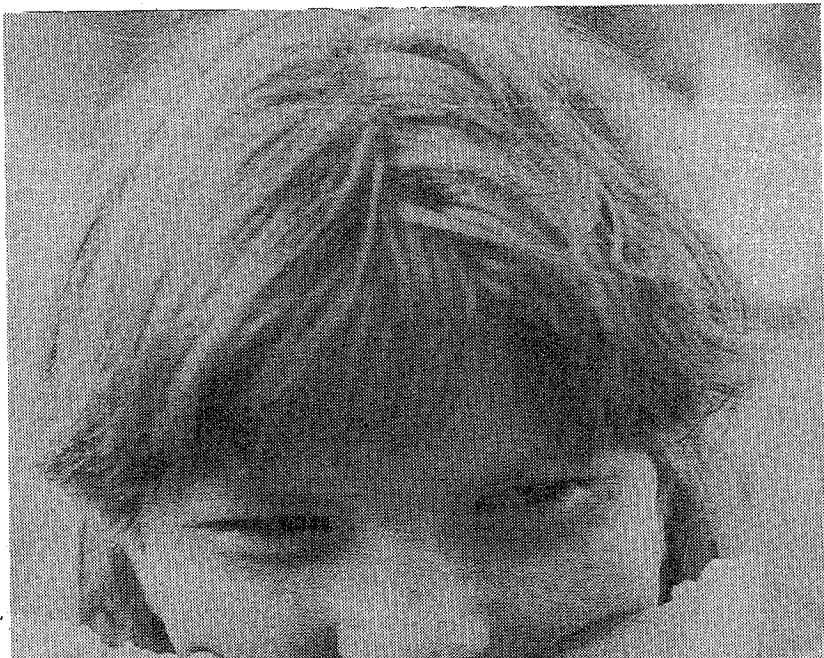


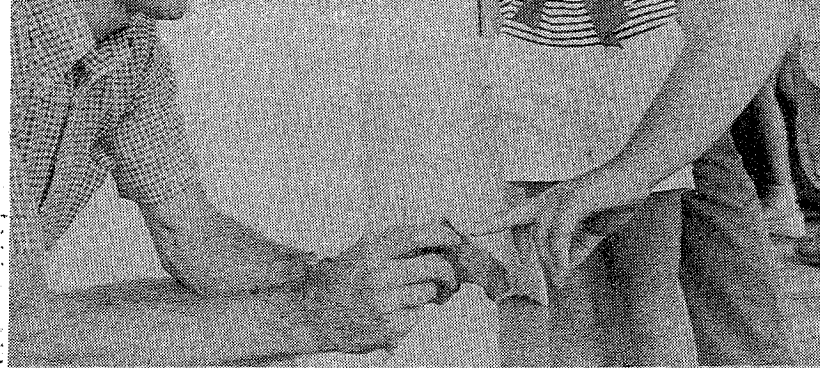
A Monday welcome on Friday

Huntsville Mayor Jane Monday welcomed local residents to the celebration of Huntsville's 150th birthday Friday evening at Town Creek Park. On July 12, 1835, Pleasant Gray received

a land grant from Mexico and named the town after Huntsville, Ala. The Sesquicentennial festivities continue today.

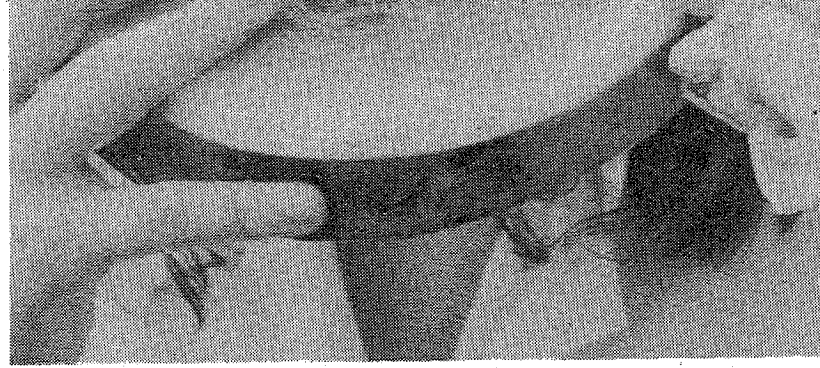
**Photos by Richard Wong
and Philip Barr**





Whittlin' demonstration

Dan Phillips of Huntsville demonstrates the art of whittling at the Gibbs-Powell House Friday night as part of Huntsville's Sesquicentennial celebration.



Taking a bite

Sherry Moody, 10, enjoys a piece of watermelon during Huntsville's 150th birthday party at Town Creek Park behind City Hall Friday.



Exhibit

Walker County Historical Commission chairman James Patton, right, was on hand for an open house and Early Texas Craftsmen exhibit at Gibbs-Powell House Friday.



Band concert

The University-Community-Camp Band, directed by Rod Cannon of Sam Houston State University, performed at the festivities at Town Creek Park Friday evening after the of-

ficial welcome and cake lighting for Huntsville's 150th Birthday.



Just a singing

The TrebleAires, a singing group composed of Kathryn McKee, Betty Herlong and Kathryn Brown that has been together for 17 years, gets a little help from Dr. Vernon Duerer at the open house and Early Texas Craftsmen exhibit at the Gibbs-Powell House Friday evening.



Town Creek crowd

A large crowd of local residents gathered at Town Creek Park, behind Huntsville City Hall, Friday for a program

recognizing Huntsville's Sesquicentennial.



Descendant of early settlers

Shirley Dye, a descendant of Hannah Gray, wife of Huntsville founder Pleasant Gray, gave background at Friday's birthday celebration on the couple who journeyed from Huntsville, Ala. to make their home in Huntsville, Texas.

Dan Phillips of Huntsville demonstrates the art of whittling at the Gibbs-Powell House Friday night as part of Huntsville's Sesquicentennial celebration.

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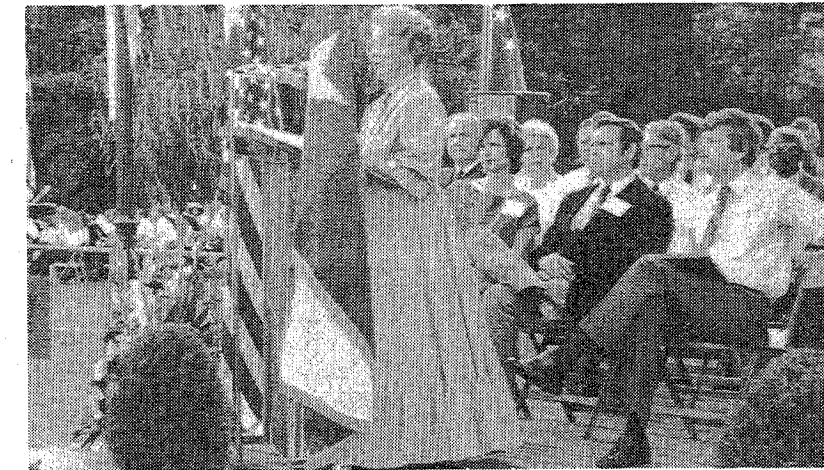
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'Sister' sends wishes for Happy Birthday

Greetings to the People of Huntsville, Texas:

As mayor and on behalf of the City Council of the City of Huntsville, Alabama, I would like to take this opportunity to extend to the people of Huntsville, Texas, our sincere congratulations on the occasion of your Sesquicentennial Celebration.

We are honored to have Huntsville, Texas, as our namesake and as our sister city and wish all her citizens the very best that life has to offer. Please accept the enclosed resolution, passed by our city council, as a gesture of friendship and goodwill between our cities.

We know that as you celebrate your 150th anniversary, you are indeed proud to be a part of such a vital and progressive community.

Again, best wishes from the people of Huntsville, Alabama.

Joe W. Davis
Mayor

City of Huntsville, Alabama

RESOLUTION

Whereas the city of Huntsville celebrated its 150th year with the sesquicentennial celebration in 1955, commemorating its 150-year history from 1805; and

Whereas the city of Huntsville was first known as Hunts Spring because of the great spring which is located at 612 feet above sea level and flows 24 million gallons per day; and

Whereas, the name was changed in 1808 by legislative action to Twickenham for Alexander Pope's English estate, and then in 1911 to Huntsville after John Hunt; and

Whereas, during the 1820s or 1830s there lived in Huntsville a man named Pleasant Gray; and

Whereas, about 1835 Pleasant Gray and Hannah Gray moved to an area now part of the state of Texas, secured land from the Mexican government and established a town, set up a trading post, and shortly thereafter began selling town lots; and

Whereas, because of similarities between the area and his former residence in Huntsville, Alabama, Pleasant Gray named the town "Huntsville"; and

Whereas, the cities of Huntsville, Alabama, and Huntsville, Texas, therefore have a special kinship, having both been established in the early 19th century, and having both prospered as desirable places to live and work; and

Whereas, the mayor and the City Council of the City of Huntsville, Alabama, wish to express congratulations and best wishes to its sister city and namesake, the City of Huntsville, Texas.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of the City of Huntsville, Alabama, that the congratulations and best wishes of the City of Huntsville and all its people are hereby extended to our sister city of Huntsville, Texas, on the occasion of its 150th anniversary.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to the governing body of Huntsville, Texas, and to the media of both great cities of Huntsville.

Adopted and approved the 11th day of July 1985

Signed,
The Huntsville City Council
Huntsville, Alabama